

Minutes

Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session, Monday, August 5, 2002, 9:30 a.m.

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Chamber of Commerce (30 years) 389 08/05/02

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, August 5, 2002, 9:30 a.m., at the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chairman W. Steve Ikerd, Vice-Chair Marie H. Huffman, and Commissioners Katherine W. Barnes, Barbara G. Beatty and Dan A. Hunsucker.

Absent: None.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Deputy County Manager Steven D. Wyatt, Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, County Staff Attorney Debra Bechtel, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

1. Chairman Ikerd called the meeting to order at 9:30a.m.
2. Invocation was offered by Commissioner Barnes.
3. Commissioner Huffman made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular session of July 8, 2002, and the special session of July 23, 2002. The motion carried unanimously.
4. Special Guests.

Chairman Ikerd recognized Lewis Woods, NAACP and Candidates Glenn Barger and Gerald Kamp. Chairman Ikerd also recognized Ron Daugherty, Candidate for U. S. Congress, 10th District.

5. Presentations:

- a. Commissioner Hunsucker presented a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 20th consecutive year from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) to Finance Director Rodney N. Miller.

Mr. Miller said this award was for fiscal year 2001 and he recognized the following Finance staff: Internal Auditor Rita Brittain, Accounting Supervisor Christy Deitz, PeopleSoft Applications Administrator Sharon Lynch, Assistant Finance Director Jeanne Jarrett, Purchasing Agent Debbie Anderson, and former Finance Director Michael Talbert.

- b. Presentation of Distinguished Public Service Award to the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce presented to President/CEO Bryan Derreberry and Catawba County Chamber Staff.

Commissioner Huffman presented a Distinguished Public Service Award to the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce to President/CEO Bryan Derreberry and Catawba County Chamber Staff.

The citation read: This Distinguished Public Service Award is presented to the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce for its thirty years of service to the citizens of Catawba County. In 1972, the Greater Hickory and the Eastern Catawba County Chamber of Commerce merged to become the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce (Catawba County Chamber). In 1975, the Catawba County Chamber organized Leadership Catawba, a 27-year program, and has graduated over 850 individuals. In 1980, the Catawba County Chamber implemented the Catawba County Small Business Person of the Year Award and in 1989 and 1995 Catawba County business persons won the North Carolina Small Business Person of the Year Award. In 1987, the Catawba County Chamber became a designated North Carolina Visitor Information Center and formed the Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau. The Catawba County Chamber established Area Councils in 1990 to be an outreach throughout Catawba County and lobbied to accomplish toll-free phoning throughout Catawba County (Claremont to Hickory and Maiden to Hickory). In 2001, the Catawba County Chamber brought the Faith In the Future awards to Catawba County to recognize businesses that have made a significant investment impacting our area, and it sponsored the largest Business Expo in Western North Carolina. As the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce enters its fourth decade, it serves as an advocate for the business community and is working to strengthen its 1,300 members through education, training, government affairs, networking opportunities and recognition.

Mr. Bryan Dørreberry thanked the Board of Commissioners for the award. He said it had been a privilege to work for Catawba County's business community for the past 30 years. He said they have played an important role in why Catawba County is the place it is today and they look forward to the next 30 years. He said the most valuable thing for them is the relationship they have with Catawba County government and one of the things that makes the Catawba County business community so unique is the public/private partnerships. He thanked his staff and also the volunteers. He thanked the Commissioners for the recognition and for what the Commissioners do each and every day for the business community and the citizenry at large.

6. Special guests not listed on agenda. None.

7. Appointments:

Public Health Board

Commissioner Barnes reappointed William M. Pekman, Physician Representative, for a second, 3-year term which will expire June 30, 2005.

Sister Cities Association Board

Commissioner Barnes reappointed Rosemarie Klingspor for a fourth, 2-year term which will expire June 30, 2004.

Nursing & Rest Home Community Advisory Committee

Commissioner Hunsucker appointed Lucille Woodrum, 216 - 2nd Avenue Place, NE, Conover, Commission Appointee, to replace Elizabeth Huss who resigned. The one-year term will expire August 5, 2003.

Newton-Conover Auditorium Authority Board of Directors

Commissioner Hunsucker reappointed Rowena M. Hodge for a first, 3-year term which will expire June 30, 2005.

Maiden Board Of Adjustment

Commissioner Beatty reappointed Lewis Parlier for a second, 3-year term which will expire June 30, 2005.

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the aforementioned appointments. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent agenda:

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy presented the following consent agenda items:

a. Criminal Justice Academy at Bandy's High School.

Mr. Lundy said the Sheriff's Office has collaborated with the Work-Force Development Division of the Catawba County Public Schools during the last five years to enhance the career decisions of students in Catawba County by implementing a summer internship in Criminal Justice. In 1999 the idea was brought about to investigate the possibility of offering a yearlong program in the Catawba County Schools in Criminal Justice. Many academies up and down the Eastern Seaboard States were visited as well as two in California. A curriculum was developed and approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. During the planning process, grant funding was sought and at that time the Sheriff's Office had a verbal commitment from the North Carolina Police Corp for this funding. Due to the budget situation in North Carolina, this verbal commitment fell through. Since the curriculum was already published, and pre-registration and scheduling was complete, it would have been a considerable task to cancel the program and reschedule the students had the program been discontinued. Last year the Crime Prevention Officer taught the Academy. The time required away from Crime Prevention to teach the academy program was too much of a drain on the Crime Prevention programs. The Sheriff's Office decided it would need additional manpower in order to teach the Academy in fiscal year 2002/2003. The Academy was highly successful last year. Two sections of Criminal Justice I were taught the first semester with an additional two sections the second semester as well as a Criminal Justice II course. All classes were filled to the maximum and more than 50 students have signed up for the curriculum this year. The School System attributes a large

measure of the Academy's success to the fact that the course was taught by an experienced law enforcement officer providing the students with practical knowledge in the field. Accordingly, the School System has approached the Sheriff's Office about continuing to supply a Deputy to teach the classes. Funds have been identified through the Work-Force Development Program to pay a halftime Deputy to teach the course. The Sheriff's Office, having assisted in the development of the academy, is also very pleased with the success of the Academy and would like to enter into an agreement with the school system to continue this program given the continued interest of the students. The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve funds in the amount of \$23,600 to be added to the budget as a supplemental appropriation for a halftime Deputy position to be devoted to the Criminal Justice Academy and approve the contract with the Catawba County School System.

Supplemental Appropriation:

Revenues:

110-210150-650600	Catawba County Schools	\$23,600
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Expenses:

110-210150-812100	Regular Wages	\$14,587
110-210150-821100	FICA	\$ 1,074
110-210150-822200	LEO Retirement	\$ 1,330
110-210150-823100	Group Health	\$ 2,878
110-210150-823300	Group Dental	\$ 125
110-210150-825500	Short Term Disability	\$ 106
110-210150-870100	Small Tools	\$ 2,000
110-210150-849160	Indirect Costs	\$ 1,500

b. Supplemental Appropriation - Newton-Conover City Schools.

The Newton-Conover City Schools budgeted \$12,000 for boiler repairs at Thornton Elementary School. The boiler was installed in 1987 and has been in operation for fifteen years. The school received a bid to replace the boiler burner, tubes and valves in the amount of \$16,479. The school found a boiler that had been used for three years on a rotating basis, one week online and the other week offline. The used boiler can be purchased for \$13,000 plus \$5,000 for installation for a total of \$18,000. According to the County Building Inspector the existing chimney needs to be lined at a cost of \$2,959. A new boiler sells for approximately \$27,000. For approximately \$21,000 the school can replace the existing boiler and have practically a new, more efficient system. The school requested a \$9,000 supplemental appropriation to purchase and install a newer, more efficient boiler. The Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve a supplemental appropriation of \$9,000 from Schools Capital Projects Fund Balance for the replacement of the boiler at Thornton Elementary School.

c. Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry (ECCCM) Lease Agreement. **This item was removed from consent and placed under departmental reports.**

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

End Consent

9. Departmental Reports:

a. Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry (ECCCM) Lease Agreement.

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy said staff requested the authorization for a proposed lease agreement with Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry (ECCCM) at the Agriculture Resource Center. ECCCM's current facility is not designed to receive goods as the facility is on two stories. The ECCCM approached the County about expanding on the current site and the Commissioners gave its agreement and over the past year the ECCCM has looked at other options including locating in downtown Newton. ECCCM is now asking that the county agree to 2.0 to 2.5 acres on the land at the Agriculture Resource Center. The ECCCM proposes to seek grants and

donations and they would not ask for any county funding to build a 7,000 to 10,000 square foot facility. He said the board is requested to authorize the County Manager to sign a lease agreement with the following requirements:

1. ECCCM as a non-profit 501(c) 3 agency supported by churches and volunteers from all denominations and will continue its mission to bring together the resources of the Christian community to serve the people in need of crisis assistance, support, and education in response to God's call.
2. ECCCM have financial commitments for the new facility before the lease is executed.
3. ECCCM will be responsible for all construction and pre construction costs.
4. The County shall approve all building plans before the facility is constructed.

Commissioner Beatty recommended the following changes to the requirement 2:

2. ECCCM have financial commitments for the new facility with 50 percent on hand and 50 percent pledged.

Mr. Lundy recommended with the revised requirement that the Board authorize a lease agreement when the Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry has 50 percent of the money in hand and the balance pledged.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to authorize a lease agreement when the Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry has 50 percent of the money in hand and the balance pledged. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Utilities and Engineering

1. County Sponsorship of North Carolina SWANA Rodeo.

Utilities and Engineering Director Barry B. Edwards said Catawba County has been offered the opportunity to sponsor the 2003 SWANA Rodeo on May 16 and 17, 2003. The annual rodeo is an event where equipment operators from North Carolina and EPA Region 4 use their skills operating numerous pieces of equipment to compete for awards. The event will be held at the Blackburn Landfill Facility in the soil borrow area on or adjacent to the old Roseman property located away from MSW landfill to insure no impact to landfill clients. SWANA will acquire necessary insurance and hold the County harmless for the event. This event is estimated to bring 300 participants, with most being accompanied by family members. This will be beneficial for our local economy, and good for Catawba County Government. I consider it an honor to host the event. This event will take a bit of effort from the U&E staff, but will be rewarding to everyone. It gives Catawba County recognition for its leadership in solid waste and staff members an opportunity to show off our outstanding facility. He said the Public Works Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners authorize the Catawba County Utilities and Engineering Department to sponsor the 2003 North Carolina Solid Waste Association of North America (NC SWANA) Rodeo event on May 16 and 17, 2003, at the Blackburn Landfill.

Mr. Edwards said Ms. Sally Summers from the Convention and Visitors Bureau was contacted to block hotel rooms for the event.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the sponsorship of the North Carolina SWANA Rodeo. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Department of Social Services

1. Work First County Plan 2003-2005.

Social Services Director Bobby K. Boyd said in 1996, Congress ended the national welfare program known as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) and crafted legislation to allow states to implement their own welfare programs. This federal devolution of authority enabled the North Carolina General Assembly to go even further with welfare reform. The

legislature took the next step; allowing counties to compete for Electing County status – in essence offering a limited number of counties the opportunity to have greater control over local welfare policies, as well as greater control over available funding.

In January 1998, Catawba County submitted its first Electing County Plan for Fiscal Years 1998-2000. In an action that stunned concerned citizens statewide, the selection of Electing Counties was completed not by merit, but by drawing names from a hat. Catawba County was not drawn. Catawba County and all other counties who were required to follow the state plan were designated as Standard counties.

In December 2000, Catawba County submitted its second Work First Plan (for Fiscal Years 2001-2003.) Initially, Catawba County requested Electing County status. Electing Counties receive a grant from the state for public assistance payments. If the public assistance rolls increase, a county could find itself in the position of paying public assistance costs (over and above the state allocation) from local dollars. The state would not tell counties what to expect as a public assistance allocation and as the economy weakened, the county decided the financial risk was too great and withdrew its request to be an Electing County.

On June 25, 2002, the County Manager received notice that all counties must once again participate in the Work First biennial planning process. All counties must submit a Work First plan to the state by November 1, 2002. Again, a limited number of counties may compete for Electing County status.

The NC General Assembly requires a local planning effort for the Temporary Assistance for Needed Families (TANF) Program every two years. The timeframe is now for 2003-2005. TANF is the federal law that changed social policy from an entitlement to a personal responsibility. In North Carolina the program is referred to as Work First. Work First has resulted in astronomical social policy changes. The number of families receiving assistance has decreased from June 1995 until present from 1,224 to 400, a decrease of 67 percent. One area in which the county has no option is the issue of immigrant eligibility of public assistance. Work First requires that legal immigrants may apply only after they have been a lawful, permanent resident (LPR) for 5-years and then to meet the other eligibility requirements than anyone else would need to meet. All public assistance programs have the same 5-year LPR requirement except food stamps which requires in addition that the lawful resident have 40 work quarters or has worked for 10 years in this country. The only exception that illegal aliens may be eligible for is Medicaid coverage in emergency situations where the emergency may result in the death of the individual or the actual delivery of a baby (only for the delivery, no pre or post care). He said as a Constitutional Right, any child born in this country is a citizen and is entitled to any services that may be offered. The child may be eligible because they are born here but the eligibility is determined on the parents income and then only the child is eligible. There is no local decision making on the issue of public assistance eligibility for immigrants as it is all federal and state and the vast majority is federal.

Mr. Boyd said the real issue is whether the County's allocation would be based on 1995-96 case counts and expenditure levels or 2001-02 levels. The federal government gives money to the states based on 1995-96.

North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 108A-27 requires county commissioners to appoint a committee of local leaders to assist in the development of the county Work First Block Grant plan. Membership of the committee must include, but is not limited to representatives of:

- Board of Social Services
- Board of the area Mental Health Authority
- Board of Public Health
- Local School Systems
- Business Community
- Board of County Commissioners, and
- Community-based organizations (that represent the population to be served)

Other groups that are recommended (but not required) to be a part of the planning process include: the local community transportation system, religious organizations, and Work First recipients.

By August 16, 2002, each county must notify the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services whether the county wishes to be a Standard or an Electing county for Work First. The Chair of the Board of County Commissioners must make this designation.

In prior years, there were numerous advantages to being an Electing County. Electing Counties are given greater flexibility in establishing eligibility policies (who is eligible to receive assistance and under what conditions). However, through the years, the state has gradually adapted the state plan to mirror the policies recommended by counties vying for Electing status. At this time the primary advantage for Catawba County in pursuing Electing County status is that it keeps the option open until critical information is received from the state regarding funding opportunities.

The Policy and Goals Subcommittee recommended that the Board of County Commissioners inform the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services that Catawba County intends to pursue Electing County Status and appoint members to serve on the Planning Committee.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Barnes made a motion to inform the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services that Catawba County intends to pursue Electing County Status. The motion carried unanimously.

Work First Planning Committee

Commissioner Beatty made a motion, which carried unanimously, to recommend the appointment of the following members to the Work First Planning Committee:

Commissioner Barbara Beatty
Donna Trado, HRD Director, Catawba Valley Community College
Ron Valentini, JobLink, Catawba Valley Community College
Glennie Daniels, NC Cooperative Extension Services
Barbara Degen, Legal Aid of NC
Mike Bradshaw, Piedmont Wagon
Susan Parrish, Day Care Supervisor, Catawba County Social Services
John Blevins, Transportation Supervisor, Catawba County Social Services
Diane Thompson, Child Support Supervisor, Catawba County Social Services
Dawn Wilson, Family Guidance Center
Henry Steele, Vocational Rehabilitation
Allen Mackie, Manager, Employment Security Commission
Gloria DeVane, ESC Counselor, Catawba County Social Services
Lori Hughes, Vocational Rehabilitation
Joy Mease, Social Security Office
Melissa Rhyne, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services
Valerie Marone, QSAP, Catawba County Social Services
Pete Miller, Hickory Printing
Ellen Menzies, Nurturing Program
Cyndy Benson, Catawba County Social Services
Kathy Clay, The Cognitive Connection,
Rev. John DeMauro, Cooperative Christian Ministry
Ed Gurley, Newton School Board
Sonya Starnes
Thomas L. Richards, Sr.
Lewis Woods, Citizen Representative

d. **Register of Deeds:**

1. Appropriation of Automation and Preservation Funds for Register of Deeds Automation.

Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry said the Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners appropriate additional fee revenues and fund balance, generated by fees in the last fiscal year, to purchase computer equipment and software services for the Register of Deeds' office and to move forward with automation and create a system to make land records available over the Internet, integrated with GIS and the property tax system.

- Fees charged for recording documents in the Register of Deeds' office were increased last year by the General Assembly and must be used for automation and preservation of documents in the Register of Deeds' office.
- The new system will provide the following benefits:
 1. Reduce the filing time by several days and create electronic images of documents recorded.
 2. Make temporary and permanent indexes and scanned images of recorded documents available daily to the public on two terminals in the Register of Deeds' office.
 3. Pass information electronically to other County computer systems (GIS, Financial system, and tax system).
 4. Provide the public Internet access to recently filed land records and eventually to existing and historical land records.
- The computer system is anticipated to be up and running in the Register of Deeds' office by September 30, 2002, and Internet access will be available to the public by January 2003.
- The total initial cost of the system is \$130,743. The ongoing cost will be \$98,000 per year, approximately \$28,000 more per year than the existing cost of indexing services.

Mr. Berry said the 1997 Strategic Technology Plan for the County identified the Register of Deeds' office as a department where automation could improve the operations of the department and public records could be made available to citizens over the Internet.

In 2001, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted House Bill 1073 which increased a number of fees charged by the Register of Deeds on recorded instruments and required County's to set aside 10% of the fees collected in a non-reverting Automation Enhancement and Preservation Fund. These funds are to be used for computer and imaging technology in the office of the Register of Deeds. These fee increases are expected to generate approximately \$120,000 per year.

The Register of Deeds and Technology staff have worked over the past 12 months to identify the best and most cost effective technology solution for the Register of Deeds' office and for public access over the Internet. At the beginning of this process, the following goals were identified for the new system:

1. Public documents easily accessible via the Internet and tied to GIS
2. Easy for Register of Deeds staff to use and time saving
3. System can adapt to changes in laws or how work is done
4. Meet all state laws and requirements

To achieve these goals and remain within the projected revenue of the Automation and Preservation fund (requiring no additional county funding), analysis focused on two primary vendors who have significant existing customers in the State. Staff conducted site visits and vendors provided demonstrations at Catawba County for both technical and Register of Deeds' office staff. A small committee of a local attorney and paralegal was formed to solicit ideas and input from the public user of the system. After much analysis and discussion, negotiations were initiated with Logan Systems Inc.

Logan Systems has provided indexing services in the Catawba County Register of Deeds' office since 1993. The company is located in Greensboro, North Carolina, and has sixteen customers in the State. Traditionally, Logan Systems provides a turnkey solution, with hardware, software, support, data and maintenance, training, and Internet services. To meet funding restrictions and achieve the goal of tightly integrating GIS and deed information on the

Internet, Logan has agreed to unbundled their turnkey business model and partner with county technology staff. Logan Systems will provide software, support, training, upgrades, data and system maintenance for cashiering, indexing, public access (in the Register of Deeds' office), imaging and microfilming services (for archival in Raleigh). County Technology staff will purchase and support hardware and will develop and host the Internet access to scanned deeds, interfacing the deeds to the tax system and GIS.

The service contract will be a fixed cost of \$98,000 per year for four years. This includes approximately \$70,000 already expended annually for indexing in the Register of Deeds' office. This compares to an initial proposal of \$176,000 per year increasing annually based on volume. The fees accumulated in the Preservation and Automation Fund should be sufficient to fund the entire cost of the contract over the next four years. This contract does not cover the conversion of existing microfilmed records, only the imaging of current documents as they are processed through the office. Conversion of existing documents to electronic images will be done under a separate arrangement (possibly a different vendor) as revenues are generated in the Automation and Preservation Fund.

The system is planned to be up and running in the Register of Deeds' office by the end of September. Internet access will follow 3-4 months later.

Funds are to be appropriated as follows:

REVENUE APPROPRIATED:

160-160050-660200	Recording of Legal Instruments	\$ 47,000
160-160050-695100	Fund Balance Applied	\$ 22,743
	Revenue Already Budgeted	<u>\$ 61,000</u>
	Total	\$130,743

EXPENDITURES:

160-160050-857900	Contractual Services	\$ 85,743*
160-160050-982000	Technology Equipment	<u>\$ 45,000</u>
	Total	\$130,743

*10.5 months of Logan Contract and includes transfer of existing \$61,000 budget in 160-160050-993100: Future Projects

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the automation funds for the Register of Deeds automation program. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Attorneys' Report.

Staff Attorney Debra Bechtel recognized Abigail Lundy, Intern in the Staff Attorney's Office. She said Ms. Lundy was researching the history of the fire district lines since 1958. She said Ms. Lundy is doing a great job on the project.

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy said Abigail was working for credit and not for money.

11. Manager's Report. None.

12. Other items of business. None.

13. Adjournment.

At 10:15 a.m., there being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Ikerd made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

W. Steve Ikerd, Chairman
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Thelda B. Rhoney
County Clerk